



BANNING'S FUTURE FELLOWSHIP 2021 COHORT
PRESENTS:

OUR FUTURE BANNING

LET'S CREATE A 21ST-CENTURY CITY TOGETHER



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LET'S CREATE A 21ST- CENTURY CITY TOGETHER

This summer, Banning's Future Fellowship (BFF), a transformative summer program for the city of Banning's young population, worked on finding innovative solutions to solve Banning's most pressing challenges.

In Banning, several areas, such as the 5th district, suffer economic disadvantages because of a lack of vital resources. For this reason and more, the city of Banning needs to make some improvements to transform into a 21st-century city. A 21st-century city is not as modern or futuristic as one might think. It is a city that provides the essential services and resources its citizens need and tangible life improvements.

To help make Banning a 21st-century city, BFF met with different government departments, community-based organizations, local businesses, and caring leaders to gain knowledge of solutions for Banning's challenges. Some initiatives include how we can get Banning alumni to return, invest, and be the ones to create solutions to help Banning.

Banning is a city that has much potential for growth and innovation. BFF believes that Banning can become a 21st-century city through community, collaboration, and creativity. These three tenets are at the heart of healthy social change.

We created this report to provide recommendations that we have gathered throughout this fellowship based on examples from what has been successful for other cities and what Banning residents want to see improved.



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LIFE

Banning's Future Fellowship engages its young leaders

Chris Castorena Special to The Desert Sun

Published 12:30 a.m. PT July 16, 2021 | Updated 9:01 a.m. PT July 16, 2021



Source: <https://www.desertsun.com/story/life/2021/07/16/bannings-future-fellowship-engages-its-young-leaders/7972160002/>



FOREWORD

BY SHANE ARCH

HEAD OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,
A BETTER BANNING



My name is Shane Arch. I must begin by mentioning that because I've always felt there was a tremendous amount of power in a name. To know my name and then for you to use it signals to me that you see me and have granted me at least some level of respect. There is also a destiny engrained in what you allow people to call you, a responsibility even. For example, if I let a good friend call me brother, I believe I make a commitment (even if unspoken) that entails support, trust, and camaraderie. Banning's Future Fellowship is the brainchild of A Better Banning, an organization whose name leaves very little to the imagination. The ultimate goal is to create a better Banning. I can't think of a greater way of doing that than by looking to other cities for inspiration, talking to people who have done the work, creating a game plan detailing how we can make the city the residents are saying they want, and then giving that plan to those elected officials with the power to create change driven by the desires of Banninites like myself. That is what is being presented to you in this report. This actionable plan walks us through a playbook of ideas we can implement to create the Banning we all deserve.

Around 1965, members of the Arch family left San Antonio, Texas, for sunny Southern California. Specifically, the small city of Banning. As far as the California chapter of the Arch family history is concerned, our roots first meet soil in Banning. My Aunt Cathy shares stories of spending summer days here only to be bribed into doing laundry at the laundromat with a Dairy Queen Dilly Bar. She and her siblings would play with the Chapman kids down the street, and she vividly remembers the whistle Mr. Chapman would make, and all his kids would come running home. She would recount stories of growing up on Orchid Lane with her brothers and spending time at The Elbow Room club. My cousin Tony Hannibal was an All-CIF pick and helped lead the Boys Banning High School Broncos basketball team to the 1987 championship game. My family has a rich history here in this city.

I've worked with youth in one capacity or another for over 10 years. I grew up just down the road in Moreno Valley, California, and in 2015 I was fortunate enough to begin working with the Boys & Girls Clubs of the San Geronimo Pass where I am currently the Teen Director overseeing the Banning Teen Center and all teen programming. I'm a Rotarian with the San Geronimo Pass Rotary Club, directly helping local causes, a member of the Chamber of Commerce, and a small business owner. The moment I arrived in Banning, I've been committed to being a changemaker, whether it be via my position as a positive male role model for the youth, my involvement, and contributions to local charities and non-profit organizations, or through my participation in A Better Banning's Mutual Aid Network food program that serves the less fortunate and unhoused population in our city.

My father, a cowboy, had me around horses for as long as I can remember. Sometimes I'd ride, and other times I'd only help my dad bring in his saddle after a long day. In comparison to the rest of my family, my experience is limited, and yet even in my limited experience, I know this: If we don't run with the stampede, we risk being run over. Why not take advantage of the opportunity presented to us and lead the charge? I believe the ideas presented in this project will help us strengthen the local economy, center residents' desires in Banning's future, and ultimately bring the city together.



MEET THE TEAM

BANNING'S FUTURE FELLOWSHIP'S
FIRST-EVER TEAM CONSISTED OF
3 FELLOWS AND 4 TEAM LEADS

THE FELLOWS



LANIA SABER

- BHS ALUMNUS
- UCR SCHOLAR
- MATCHA TEA LOVER
- FASHIONISTA



HABIBA NAQVI

- UCR MASTER OF PUBLIC POLICY CANDIDATE
- LOVES EVERYTHING MANGO



VERONICA MENENDEZ

- UCSD ALUMNUS
- COFFEE LOVER
- TRAVEL ENTHUSIAST

TEAM LEADS



CHRIS CASTORENA

- BHS ALUMNUS
- UCR MASTER OF PUBLIC POLICY CANDIDATE
- WATCHES KOBE HIGHLIGHTS DAILY



YOLI AGUILAR CANDELARIO

- UCR MASTER OF PUBLIC POLICY CANDIDATE
- LIKES TO HIKE AND SHOP
- HAS ADORABLE NEPHEWS AND NIECES



KATHERINE AVILA

- UCR MASTER OF PUBLIC POLICY CANDIDATE
- RISK TAKER
- LOVES TO SKYDIVE AND TRY NEW THINGS



MARCO SANTANA

- BHS ALUMNUS
- BANNING PLANNING COMMISSIONER
- AMATEUR ROCK CLIMBER AND ANIME LOVER

BANNING'S FUTURE FELLOWSHIP INITIATIVES

Community Summit

Our goal with Banning's Community Summit was to create a comfortable environment for community members to meet each other and share ideas on celebrating and improving Banning. We welcomed caring residents, organizations, the local government, and local businesses.



Mutual Aid

Mutual aid is when a community comes together voluntarily to help meet each other's needs either by redistributing resources or exchanging services. With help from the Boys & Girls Club, we shared packaged meals with our unhoused population.



Cafecito Thursdays

To increase discussion on how we could better Banning, we held coffee chats every Thursday at the local cafe, The Haven. We had various community members meet with us, including local artist Rich Lopez, Banning's Boys & Girls Club members, and even the Mayor, Colleen Wallace.



Community Survey

To learn more about the needs and wants of Banning's residents, the Fellowship team created the Banning Community Survey full of diverse questions asking residents how they felt about city services, city government, their physical environment, and more. Most importantly, they could write out specific issues they wanted to see tackled.



Banning's Guide to Healthy Eating

From our research, Banning is home to many fast-food restaurants. Our team created a plant-based food guide to help residents choose healthier options from local dining locations available, including many Banning restaurants and cafes.



Little Free Libraries: In Process

With help from Banning's Public Library, Banning's Future Fellowship is looking to set up small book-sharing boxes around the city to promote literacy. These little libraries will be built with the help of Banning's youth leaders and local volunteers and will feature a diverse and inclusive reading list that includes children and young adult books.

SNAPSHOT OF BANNING



Banning is located between Mt. San Geronio and Mt. San Jacinto, also known as the San Geronio Pass. Mt. San Geronio is the highest peak in California, south of the Sierras, and home to excellent hiking trails.

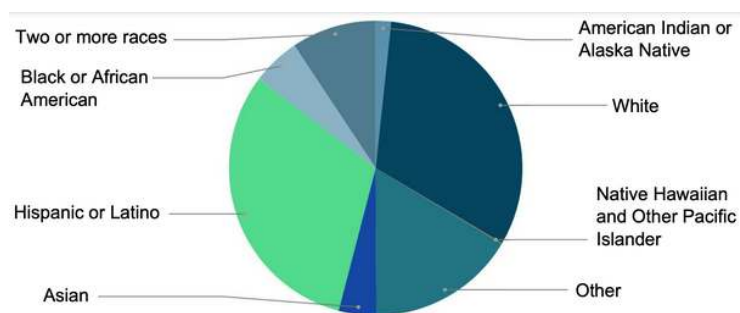


"Desert Cahuilla woman" (1926)

Up until the mid-19th century, the area was inhabited by the rich indigenous culture, customs, and traditions of the Cahuilla people, though the region around Banning was originally Maringayam (Serrano).

In 2019, Hispanic residents comprised the most prominent ethnic/racial group in Banning at 47%, followed by White residents at 36% and African American residents at 7.8%. The Asian population (4.5%) includes a vibrant community of Hmong residents, while the Native American population (2.6%) includes our neighbors from the Morongo Reservation. As was attested to many times during the past year, our diversity of thought and lived experiences comprises one of Banning's greatest strengths.

Race and Ethnicity



Source: American Community Survey, 2010-2014, 2015-2019

Local landmarks include the vintage Fox Theater, Banning Aquatic Center, Dorothy Ramon Learning Center, and a Performing Arts and Career Technical Education Center in Banning High School.



Occupation Sector	Number of Jobs	Percent of Total
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	102	1.0%
Construction	722	7.4%
Manufacturing	828	8.5%
Wholesale trade	282	2.9%
Retail trade	1,678	17.2%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	647	6.6%
Information	62	0.6%
Finance, insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing	328	3.4%
Professional, scientific, management, admin., and waste management	722	7.4%
Educational, health care and social assistance	2,108	21.6%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, accommodation, and food services	1,437	14.7%
Other services, except public administration	507	5.2%
Public Administration	338	3.5%
Total Employed Population	9,761	100.0%

Source: American Community Survey 2015-2019

GROWING POPULATION OF

~31,125

MEDIAN AGE

41.5

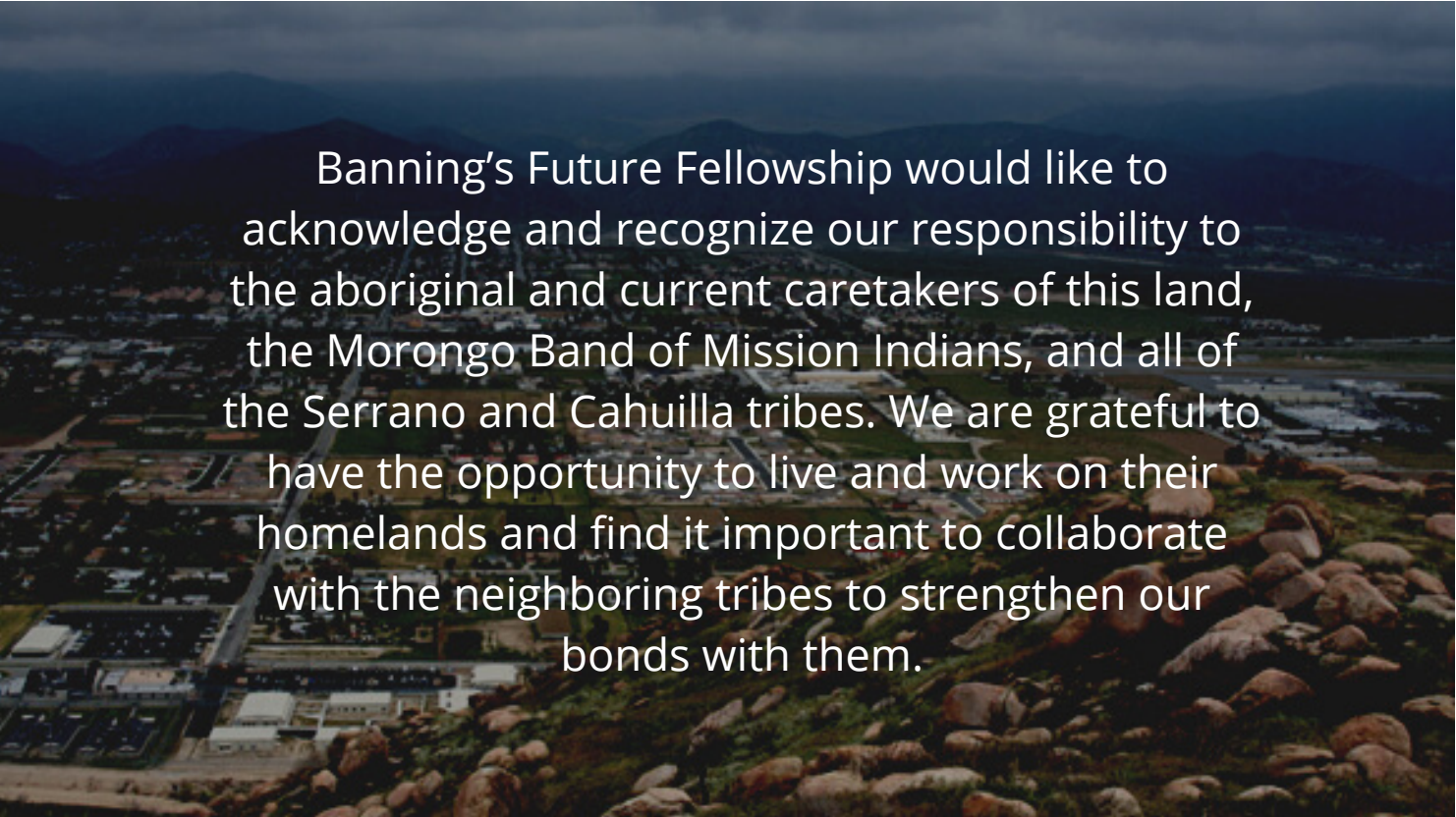
POVERTY RATE

20.6%

INCORPORATED IN

1913

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT



Banning's Future Fellowship would like to acknowledge and recognize our responsibility to the aboriginal and current caretakers of this land, the Morongo Band of Mission Indians, and all of the Serrano and Cahuilla tribes. We are grateful to have the opportunity to live and work on their homelands and find it important to collaborate with the neighboring tribes to strengthen our bonds with them.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON OUR NATIVE TRIBES IN OUR AREA VISIT: [HTTPS://NATIVE-LAND.CA](https://native-land.ca)

METHODOLOGY

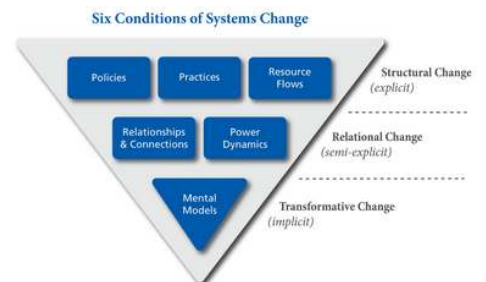
The core of our processes, research, and analysis was inspired by Action Civics and The Water of Systems Change frameworks.

The goal of Banning's Future Fellowship (BFF) is to investigate practices that Banning can adopt to improve the overall well-being of Banning residents. An effort like this requires the support of various stakeholders, including community members, academics, Inland Empire city staff and councilmembers, nonprofit organization leaders, local business owners both in and out of Riverside County and of the state of California.

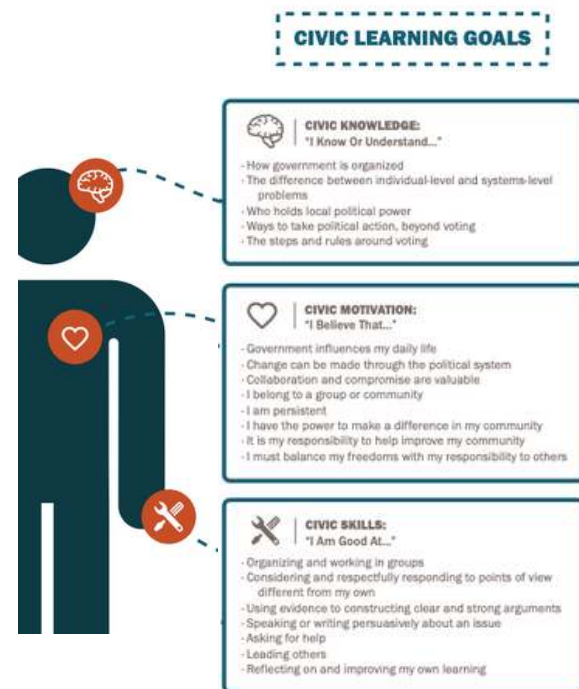
On June 23rd of 2021, BFF team leads presented their ideas, initiatives, and partnerships to Banning City Council. In July 2021, BFF started its pilot, beginning with a discussion around improving Banning's parks, environment, and sustainability. During the course of eight weeks, each week BFF investigated different topics in this order: 1) Parks, Environment, and Sustainability, 2) Accessibility, Connectivity, and Transportation, 3) Government and Public Service, 4) Arts and Culture, 5) Health and Education, 6) Local Businesses and Entrepreneurs and 7) Housing and Community Design. Each week, we held informal interviews and meetings with our stakeholders where fellows took notes of actions others had done to improve their city and community.

Using elements from the two frameworks mentioned above, Fellows analyzed community issues by questioning the different types of barriers Banning residents are facing. Some of the answers to their questions were answered by neighboring city leaders, nonprofit leaders, and community members who faced similar obstacles and provided insights on how to overcome them.

Through community-based research, participation, and real-life examples, Fellows pitched ideas, potential projects, and practices Banning could engage in.



Source: https://www.fsg.org/publications/water_of_systems_change



Source: <https://generationcitizen.org/>



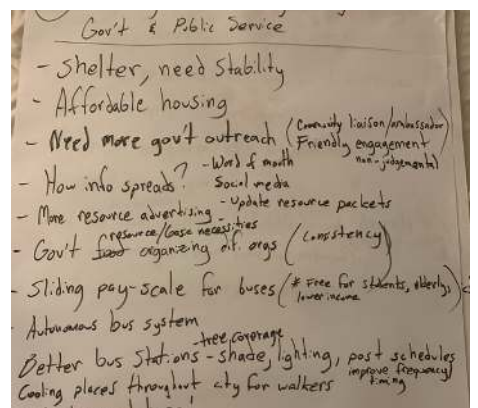
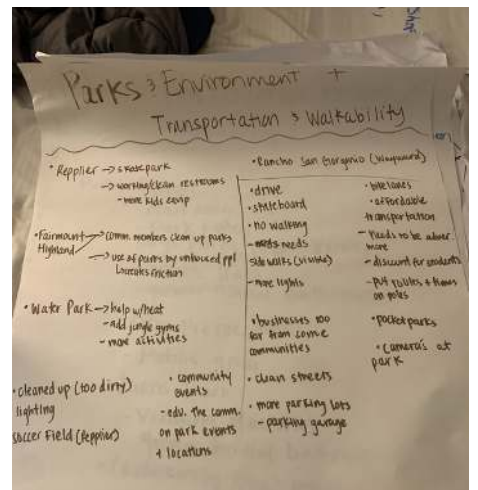
METHODOLOGY

Although all types of data collection were valuable, perhaps the most critical data collected was the tremendous amount of sharing among a diverse group of attendees at the Banning Community Summit on August 26th, 2021, in the City Hall Council Chambers. Attendees had the opportunity to voice their concerns and recommendations supporting the future of Banning.

Over 25 residents attended this first-ever youth-led Banning Community Summit, including local students, nonprofit leaders, and local business owners. The Record Gazette generously reported the [announcement](#) of the community summit and the actual [event](#).

At the start of the Banning Community Summit, attendees were encouraged to participate in an anonymous community survey, where we received over 50 responses. After the survey, attendees were assigned to four break-out sessions where each session discussed specific topics. Attendees were reminded that all opinions and recommendations were encouraged and welcomed. Each session was led by a BFF leader and fellow who took note of the concerns and suggestions mentioned by the attendees on a large post-it poster. Groups rotated every five minutes to obtain community input from all attendees on each topic.

Throughout this report, summaries of the concerns most discussed by the attendees will be detailed by topic.





PARKS, ENVIRONMENT, & SUSTAINABILITY

SETTING THE SCENE

Parks, environment, and sustainability is a topic that encompasses a wide array of essentials not limited under simply "parks and recreation." We investigate services that cater to residents' entertainment, leisure-based needs, and overall health outcomes. This includes resources such as public spaces and facilities like parks, nature preserves, open space areas, greenways, trails, and spaces for sports, recreation, and arts programs. Examples of services include recreational activities, sports or athletic teams, community-based events (i.e., carnivals, festivals), and arts and crafts programs. Through safe, clean parks and open spaces, people can access clean water and air quality, leading to less congestion and an overall healthier community environment.

Sustainability is about being intentional with our land use, ensuring environmentally-friendly practices that do not exhaust or exploit our natural resources. Examples include 1.) community gardens/farms, where residents work together to grow and produce healthy and fresh food for free or affordable prices, and 2.) green architecture, reducing resource use and lower greenhouse gas emissions - like using natural building materials and solar panels. The fellowship team met with community officials, nonprofits, and many others implementing sustainable practices and designs in their city.

In Riverside, the Founder of the nonprofit Overflow Farms, Fred Stover, explained how community gardens empower residents to provide healthy food options to areas that face food insecurity.



Via Zoom, Sustainability Officer Fortino Morales III from the Office of Sustainability at UC Riverside spoke on UCR's sustainable practices and the department's mission of building an economy that will create opportunities for all.



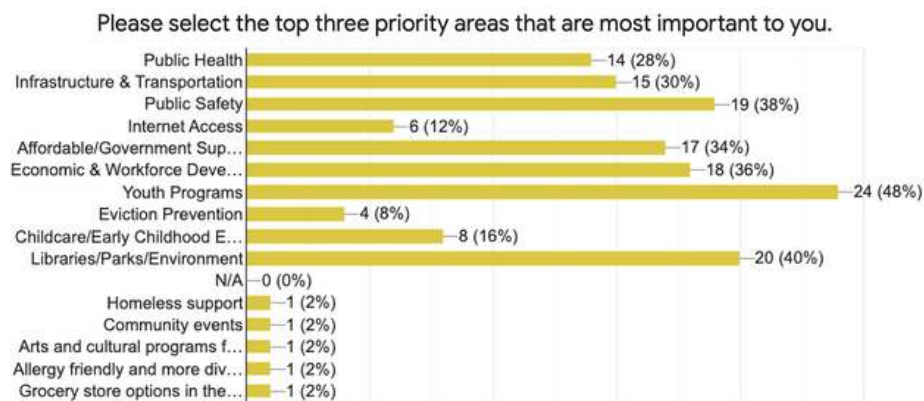
Via Zoom, Aram Ayra, Founder of Riverside Mutual Aid Network, spoke on the importance of providing community members with various types of food and hygienic aids, and Johnny Miller, Founder of Riverside Food Not Bombs, inspired us with their dedication to providing plant-based meals to high-need members of the community.



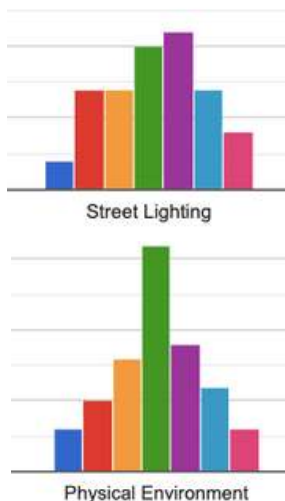
From Riverside Mutual Aid Instagram

CURRENT IMPRESSIONS

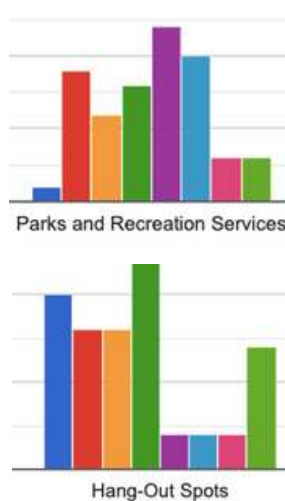
Using the results from our Banning Community Survey and the suggestions from Banning's Community Summit, we learned how the residents of Banning felt about their physical environment and what they wanted to see changed. It was clear from the survey results that most residents considered Parks and the Environment as a top priority area.



However, residents had "Mixed Feelings" about their physical environment. They also felt 'Unhappy' about park services, rated hang-out spots as "Terrible", and had "Mixed Feelings" about street lighting. The same concerns were echoed at the Community Summit.



"Parks need... more activities, more lighting, working water fountains..."
- Ideas from Community Summit



In addition, the majority voted "No" on there being a place to buy or harvest locally grown food (community farm/garden). Residents also expressed a need for more local grocery stores.

"I would love to have a local grocery store in Banning. Somewhere between District 2 and 5. My family travels outside of the city to buy basic necessities and fresh produce and we would love to shop more local."
- Banning Resident

Despite our survey results, Banning's parks have tons of potential to grow and expand. It is clear that "Parks and Environment" are considered essential, and by working together, we can create a more sustainable city ecosystem.

"I would like to see our parks division grow and improve upon the parks we currently have. We need a covered venue that is lighted that can accommodate basketball and other sports."
- Banning Resident



PARKS, ENVIRONMENT, & SUSTAINABILITY

RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations are derived mainly from public opinion and are for the city of Banning in terms of Parks, Environment, & Sustainability.

Recommendation 1: Pocket Parks & Community Parks

During the Banning Community Summit, residents expressed that they desired the creation of more parks that included recreational amenities like playgrounds and soccer fields. They expressed that parks with these amenities were too far away from their neighborhood. A cost-effective idea is pocket parks, much like The Historic Downtown San Bernardino Living Pocket Park Project. Pocket parks are typically no more than 1/4 of an acre and feature communal amenities that are also present in larger parks, including basketball courts, picnic benches, and even large canopy spaces. However, with their smaller size, a handful of these parks can be added throughout empty lots in the city to beautify neighborhoods and increase the amount of green space and gathering spaces for exercise and play. Adding more parks is feasible due to the large amounts of open land and will enhance public health. Visit the NRPA issue brief on pocket parks.

Recommendation 2: Community Gardens & Farms

With the guidance of nearby regional farms like Overflow Farms, Banning could set up their own community garden/farm. It will be highly beneficial due to the lack of grocery stores in Banning and give residents, nonprofits, and food shelters access to organically grown food. A community garden and farm can be created with no cost to the city with the help of grant money from the county or state. All that is needed is an open plot of land, which Banning has an abundant amount, and volunteers to help run the operation.

Recommendation 3: Sports Programs & Public Events

Collaboration with various organizations in Riverside County can help create more youth park programs in Banning. Many residents suggested creating a 'Community Events Commission' to plan fun activities and regularly gather input from the community on possible events. See City of Montclair's community activities commission.

Recommendation 4: Green Stewards Program

From the Banning Community Summit and Survey, we learned that overgrown weeds and piles of trash in the city, along with bathroom sanitation in parks, were all significant concerns. Additionally, there was concern for tree equity between the east and west regions of Banning. Creating a Green Stewards Program can provide gainful employment for our most vulnerable populations and concentrate on the city's day-to-day maintenance. This initiative can contribute to the town's overall beautification, hygiene, and cleanliness. See City of Kansas City, Missouri Green Stewards Program.

Recommendation 5: Neighborhood Lighting

Many residents expressed that they would like more lighting on their streets and parks. Using street lamps with protective shades and facing them downward or using LED street lights will decrease light pollution and be a sustainable and low-cost solution. For instance, the City of Sandy, Oregon has had success using LED street lights throughout their city and in parks. Placing more lighting in communal spaces such as playgrounds, walking paths, and community centers will significantly improve safety.



ACCESSIBILITY, CONNECTIVITY, & TRANSPORTATION

SETTING THE SCENE

Accessibility, connectivity, and transportation are about how convenient our city is for residents to live, work, and grow. People of all abilities need proper avenues to meet their daily needs, living in areas where their desired destinations are within an accessible distance of public transportation. Enter the concept of a 15-minute city that helps incentivize small-scale development, where residents have their basic necessities met through close proximity, no more than 15 minutes, from their living spaces. It's where nutrition, medical care, entertainment services, employment, and more are available within a short span of your doorstep. A 15-minute city is necessary because one's zip code should not dictate access to resources and opportunities. To learn more about leveraging and creating transit-friendly public policy, BFF met with several managers from different city governments.

In Banning, City Manager Doug Schulze taught us about the inner workings of City Hall and the city's initiatives to revitalize Banning's downtown into a multi-mobility area.



In Redlands, Planning Manager Brian Foote and Economic Development Manager Cruz Esparza gave us a tour of downtown Redlands and shared how they keep it pedestrian-friendly.



Program Manager Chris Tzeng from Western Riverside Council Of Governments (WRCOG) informed us about the Inland Empire's greatest challenges when it comes to transportation and what we can do create a more efficient city.



"The more Banning can increase its transportation options, the better Banning will be."

-Chris Tzeng

CURRENT IMPRESSIONS

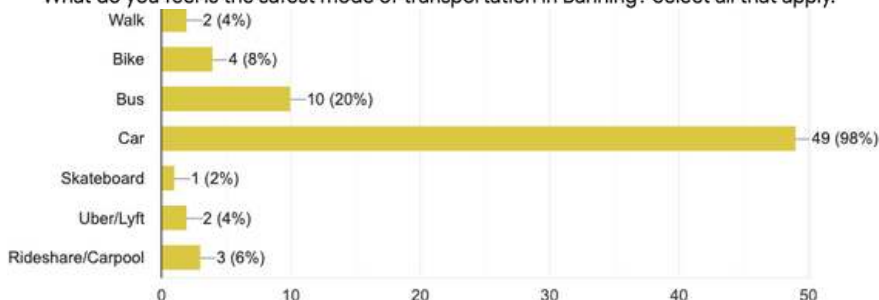
Living in a city that is accessible, connected, and has excellent transportation are vital components to building a 21st-century city. From our interactions with Banning's residents, we have learned that many have mixed feelings about Banning's bus transportation system, people-friendly streets and believe substantive improvements are needed. Low investment in public transportation and car-centric land-use policies have disincentivized people from walking, biking, or riding the bus.

What is your main mode of transportation?

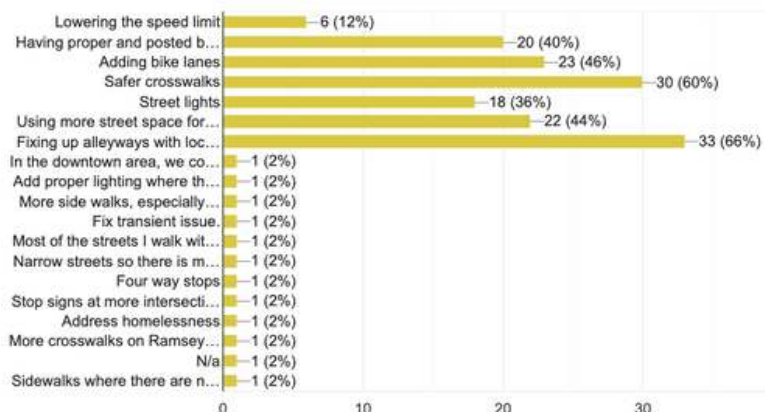


Everyone travels, and how one gets around has severe health and environmental implications. Many have expressed that they would get around the city by walking or biking if the streets in Banning were pedestrian-friendly. Currently, many feel that the safest mode of transportation is via car.

What do you feel is the safest mode of transportation in Banning? Select all that apply.



There are many ways to make Banning more accessible and connected with reliable bus transportation. We asked residents what improvements could help the three aspects listed above in the graph below. The most votes included: fixing up alleyways with local street art (place-making) to feel safer, having safer sidewalks, adding protected bike lanes, and having proper and posted bus schedules. It's clear that there is significant support in improving these three aspects, and with the help of the city government, Banning can make it easier for its residents to get to the places they need to go.



"[Banning needs] sidewalks by people's homes so they don't have to walk in the street with their stroller and... have people almost hit them constantly while dogs chase us to the park."

- Banning Resident

ACCESSIBILITY, CONNECTIVITY, & TRANSPORTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations are derived mainly from public opinion and are for the city of Banning in terms of Accessibility, Connectivity, & Transportation.

Recommendation 1: Banning Pass Transit System Improvements

There is a need for a more efficient bus riding system. One improvement would be to make the bus routes and times more accessible by posting the schedule online or having a [QR code](#) to scan at each stop to see when and which bus will arrive physically. Secondly, Banning uses an app called [Transit](#) to help residents navigate the bus system. However, not many people know about the app nor how to use it because it is not publicized. Posting a [how-to page](#) on the city website would help residents learn how to use the app and ride the bus with ease. Lastly, the school district can partner with the Riverside Transit Agency (RTA) to allow students (or all residents) to ride the bus for free like the [San Bernardino County's partnership with Omnitrans](#) that allows free bus rides for K-12 students for school and any other event they may need to attend.

Recommendation 2: Transportation Commission

Much like [Glendale](#) and [Lafayette](#), more Californian cities are incorporating Transportation Commissions to address challenges relating to on-street parking, traffic safety, public transit, ride-sharing, bikeways, and pedestrian policies and protection. Each transportation commissioner would serve a specific neighborhood or one of Banning's five districts, address community concerns, and make recommendations for the local municipal government's city council and public works department. With this added Transportation Commission, the community will have an additional means of voicing their concerns regarding transportation policy during public meetings.

Recommendation 3: Protected Bike Lanes to Enhance Safety

Adding protected bike lanes will allow people to ride bikes safely without worrying about oncoming traffic or their safety. Roads and streets with [bike lanes](#) will allow people to use bikes as an alternative transportation method rather than relying solely on buses or cars. This can incentivize residents to bike locally, alleviating traffic and allowing more effortless mobility. Students can also take advantage of bike lanes by [safely biking](#) to and from school and nearby areas.

Recommendation 4: Revised Speed Limits

Although [speed limits in Banning](#) vary from 25, 35, or even 45 mph, lowering the speed limit on the busiest streets and roads will allow residents to walk and bike around the city more safely. Additionally, a [lower speed limit](#) will increase pedestrian safety, accessibility to physical activity and lower the reliance on urban transportation. A decrease in speed limit will create a more inviting space for people to spend on retail, boosting the local economy. Narrower lanes slowed traffic down in San Francisco and increased [40% in overall sales](#).

Recommendation 5: Wi-Fi Zones

Allowing a community to become more connected can be achieved through [Wi-Fi zones](#) in public spaces such as parks, bus stops, and community centers which is spreading quick across very popular cities like [San Francisco and New York City](#). These zones will facilitate connectivity solutions by providing internet access to resources they may need and will lessen the [digital divide](#). Allowing a [Wi-Fi network](#) available to all residents and tourists will improve their ability to move around and communicate with others. See this [How-To Guide](#) to start.



GOVERNMENT & PUBLIC SERVICE

SETTING THE SCENE

What are the essential qualities of a proactive local government, rather than reactive, to the needs of the residents it serves? How does a government help facilitate a healthy and safe community? A people-centered government can influence many factors that play into a thriving community, including job support, economic development, affordable housing, health services, education, and beyond. Its job is to invest and ensure that its residents' basic needs are met, deliver tangible life improvements for everyone, and provide multiple avenues for residents to engage in the decision-making processes that impact their quality of life. Aside from the Parks and Recreation and Planning Commissions, Banning has six other commissions which scarcely meet: Economic Development, Healthy Living City, Downtown Ad Hoc, Electric Cost of Service, Homelessness Advisory, and Government Access Channel. These commissions should meet regularly with meeting times more readily available, contain action-oriented agenda items, and operate on the premise of keeping membership public.



District Representative for Senator Connie Leyva and District 4 Director for Jurupa Area Recreation & Park District, Edgar Castelan



Moreno Valley Mayor Yxtian Gutierrez



Moreno Valley Transportation Department Engineering Technician, Julien Van Simaey and City Traffic Engineer, Wei Sun



Banning's Future Fellowship



City of Coachella Council Member, Neftali Galarza



Redlands Planning Manager, Brian Foote



Louisville, Kentucky, District 4 Council Member Jecorey Arthur



Beaumont City Manager, Todd Parton

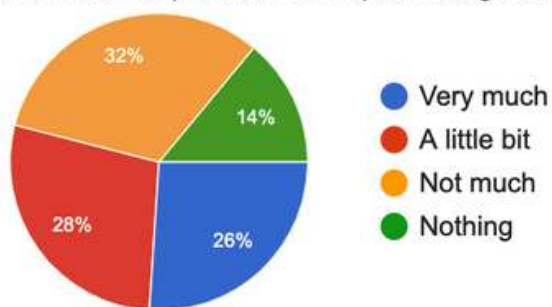


Banning Economic Development Manager, James Wurtz

CURRENT IMPRESSIONS

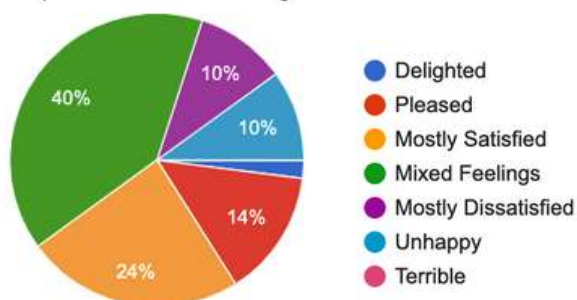
The local government is in charge of having a city thrive socially, economically, environmentally, and beyond. Unfortunately, many people overlook the importance of local government and don't pay much attention to its work and services. The pie chart below shows that Banning residents know "A Little Bit" or "Not Much" about local government.

How much do you know about your local government?



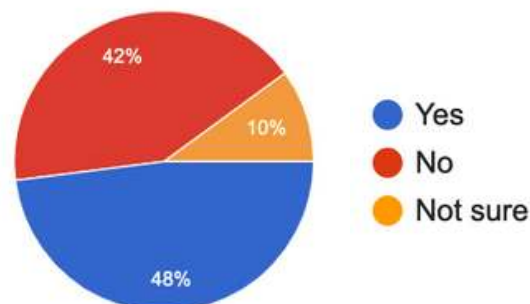
We asked Banning residents how often they went to City Hall, and many responded with "Never," "Rarely," and one response stated that they "did not know what kind of services City Hall offered." This sentiment aligns with survey results showing that residents have "Mixed Feelings" about government services.

How do you feel about local government services overall?



The current feelings about Banning's local government are unfortunate, but they can be changed in many ways. However, one significant aspect all local governments must have is council members who are responsive to their constituents' wants and needs. Many of Banning's residents don't know who their council member is and how to contact them.

Do you know who your council members are and how to contact them?



Fundamentally, the local government is in charge of providing a good quality of life for the people who reside in their city. It is essential that residents be informed and that the local government keeps them informed.

"We need to invest in our youth and homeless population. Government should be much more transparent with their services and where tax dollars are going. We need to invest more in community resources. No more excuses, it's our money."

- Banning Resident

RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations are derived mainly from public opinion and are for the city of Banning in terms of Government & Public Service.

Recommendation 1: Accessible Information & Inclusive Meetings

Local governments have a significant responsibility to ensure that all information about a city is genuinely accessible to all of its residents regardless of ability. Strategies include 1.) Updating the city website interface to be more user-friendly and accessible; residents expressed confusion navigating the website and new city budget tool 2.) Establishing clear lines of multi-lingual communication between City Hall staff and the community; residents have expressed a perceived lack of outreach 3.) Like Beaumont's government does on Youtube, advertising and streaming all meetings/activities via social media (i.e., Facebook, Instagram, Youtube, and Twitter Live) 4.) Like Palm Springs, providing multi-lingual city meeting agendas, infographics, general information, and having translators present; many residents have expressed feeling unwelcomed at city hall and the council chambers.

Recommendation 2: Leadership Academy & Youth Council

Banning's Community Summit and Survey revealed residents' overwhelming lack of knowledge of local government services. Bringing back Banning's Leadership Academy, a City Hall initiative teaching residents about local government, is a great program that helped educate residents on city operations. Additionally, a Youth Council is the ideal way local government can develop a relationship with the city's youth, is cost-free, and helps prepare Banning's future public servants in professional development and local decision making. See Eastvale, Fontana, and Yucca Valley, for example.

Recommendation 3: City Hall Youth Opportunities

Just like in Palm Springs, offering internships and fellowships at City Hall gives students a unique learning experience in local government, allowing them to work closely with various departments and collaborate on meaningful projects with a bend toward future generations. City employees donate their time to oversee and coordinate the opportunities. There are programs already available, like Western Riverside Council of Governments (WRCOG) Public Service Fellowship, that the city has money set aside for but has not used. Training current scholars can help reverse the brain drain and strengthen our tax base by hiring locally.

Recommendation 4: Community Advisory Boards

Banning's Advisory Commissions and City Council can significantly benefit from a more democratic and equity-centered decision-making process. Establishing community advisory boards (CAB) will help city officials make better-informed decisions with the community. Each district can have its own board and provide leadership opportunities for passionate residents. See this How-To Guide to start.

Recommendation 5: Participatory Budgeting

Participatory budgeting (PB) is a concept that gives a portion of municipal decision-making to residents so they have a direct say in public budget spending. Practiced in cities like Vallejo, California, this inclusive tool of civic engagement allows locals to identify community needs, work directly with public officials to create realistic proposals that meet taxpayer needs, and vote on when and where to allocate funds.



ARTS & CULTURE

SETTING THE SCENE

Arts and culture play an essential role in promoting the city's customs, is a direct reflection of its residents, helps preserve history, and benefits the local economy. The city's design can generate millions in revenue by attracting additional creatives and customers due to local art projects increasing employment and direct spending. This includes street art, better lighting, graffiti wall art, digital billboards, and other art forms to display the community's strengths. This will allow more spaces to look and feel unique and welcoming, thus attracting more diverse groups of people and positively impacting the city. Additionally, a lively and inclusive culture allows people to feel more attached to a town and feel a sense of belonging when the culture caters to the different needs of all community members.



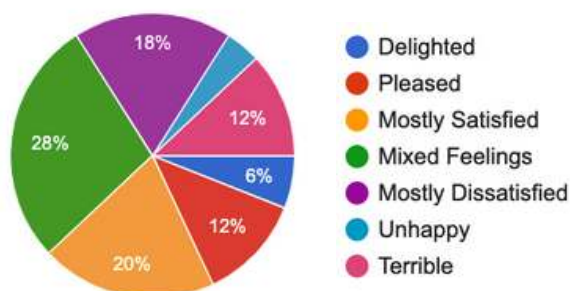
At a private ceramics event held at The Haven in Downtown Banning, local artist Rich Lopez taught us how arts and culture are a powerful way to uplift a city and build an inclusive community. Above is one of his many creative pieces.

The BFF team had a delightful trip to Palm Springs to visit the Palm Springs Art Museum and enjoyed their "Villagefest," full of food and artisan vendors to demonstrate to Fellows what Banning's future art scene can look like with substantive investment.

CURRENT IMPRESSIONS

Arts and culture bring people together to celebrate their diverse backgrounds and stories. Art, specifically local art, reflects a community and makes it unique. Culture brings together the experiences of its residents through various ways, such as memorable concerts and parades. Together, both are important for a city to have. Currently, however, Banning residents have "Mixed Feelings" about the overall entertainment and culture of the city.

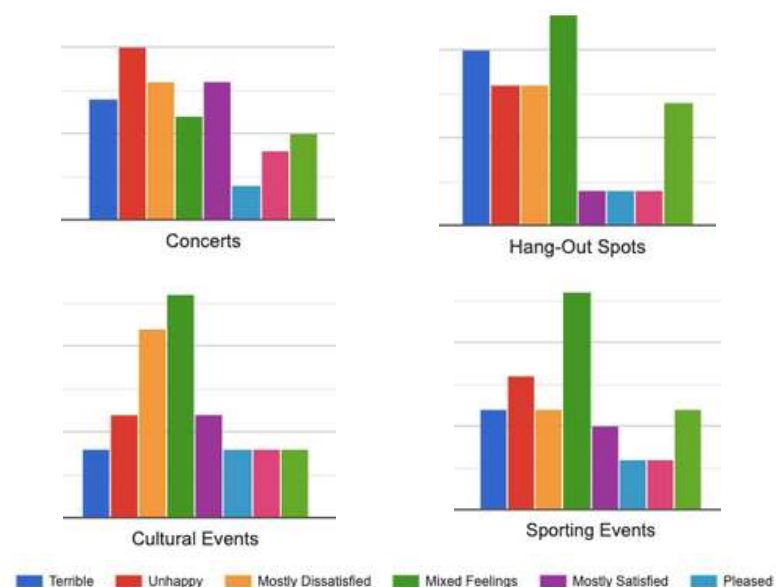
How do you feel about entertainment/culture overall?



At Banning Community Summit, many residents expressed that arts and culture will stand out by revitalizing Banning's downtown and by empowering local artists to unleash their creativity in alleyways and beyond. Below is a quote that encapsulates this idea:

"Make downtown a destination and instill a culture of pride in Banning's history, many cultures, and one-of-kind beautiful geography ... so many assets."
- Banning Resident

Along with revitalizing downtown, there are many other ways to make Banning more lively such as adding hang-out spots, cultural events, sporting events, and concerts. Below are the current sentiments for these ideas, ranging from "Terrible" to "Mixed Feelings."



Nevertheless, many can agree that Banning has tons of potential to showcase its creative side. More arts and culture can be showcased through more robust collaboration with the local government and the community.

"Banning is a beautiful evolving community. The views and land can attract tourist and entertainment for locals. We can host our own Christmas tree lightings, pumpkin patches, farmers markets, a day to buy food from food trucks."
- Banning Resident

ARTS & CULTURE

RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations are derived mainly from public opinion and are for the city of Banning in terms of Arts & Culture.

Recommendation 1: Street Art

Adding local art to alleyways and building surfaces will make the city look and feel more lively. Like the Orange Street Alleyway in Redlands, street art can be added with the help of local artists, designers, and even youth interested in making Banning more colorful. Ultimately, adding more local art to the city creates a sense of pride, community, attracts visitors, and helps residents feel safer.

Recommendation 2: Youth-Centered Art Galleries

Downtown Banning is the perfect place to provide space to display local youth-centered art. Opening a youth-focused art gallery like the City of Costa Mesa will be able to showcase a diverse display of art and teach the community the value of art in youth to increase the community engagement in Banning. Youth art contests can also be held for all community members. Moreover, having this gallery will provide an attractive opportunity for the residents to spend more time downtown. This can be done with the assistance of local artists and Banning's economic development manager for successful execution.

Recommendation 3: Food Lab

Creating a Food Lab in Banning similar to the Riverside Food Lab, will provide an opportunity for the interaction of diverse restaurants within our community. Being exposed to various cultures through food gives people perspective on the differences and similarities they have with people culturally different from them. A Food Lab is also a great hang-out spot for all ages. With help from Banning's economic development manager, Banning could have its own Food Lab on any of its many open lots of lands downtown.

Recommendation 4: Local Cultural Events

Banning can host more cultural events such as the Agave Harvest and Roast at the Malki Museum and farmers' markets every week throughout Riverside County. Hosting these events also allows residents to participate in city events, increasing their satisfaction with the city as they will have a more significant community presence. In essence, more local cultural events will bring together the community in a fun and engaging way.

Recommendation 5: New "Welcome" Sign

Banning's welcome sign does not currently showcase our many unique characteristics, which can cause a lack of interest among the many drivers on the freeway. Our city's welcome sign should be multilingual and inviting to visitors showcasing our cultural diversity and prominent landmarks throughout the San Geronio Pass. Like other cities, organizations such as the local Rotary Club, Lion's Club, and Kiwanis Club can fund it. Remodeling ours will create a more inviting and vibrant aura in which Banning residents can help with the remodel to showcase their pride in their city and foster community development.

Recommendation 6: Youth Poet Laureate

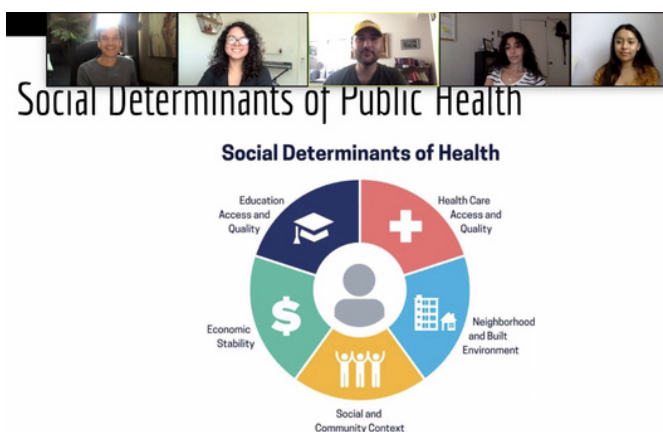
The City of Banning should partner with the National Youth Poet Laureate Program (NYLP) to have our very own Youth Poet Laureate who will have the opportunity to read the pastor's prayer at the beginning of every city council meeting. This is a great opportunity to engage youth in artistic excellence, civic engagement, and social justice. Similar to Orange County, this will encourage our youth to take part in transformative community engagement through the power of poetry.



HEALTH & EDUCATION

SETTING THE SCENE

A community's well-being is deeply tied to the city's investment in education and health services. Still, these services include many areas that we may not traditionally imagine as "health and education." Creating a solid educational foundation for our residents does not just mean providing more opportunities for our youth in the classroom; it includes child care and universal pre-kindergarten services, expanded mental health services for students, professional workshops, and internship opportunities. Likewise, healthcare comprises many social and economic factors outside of hospital spaces; quality health outcomes are dependent on readily available healthy food options and grocers, community spaces and gyms to exercise and play, and many other factors.



Thelma Navarro, MPH, student worker for County of San Diego Health and Human Services, presented the factors that help promote healthy living and communal resources in a city.



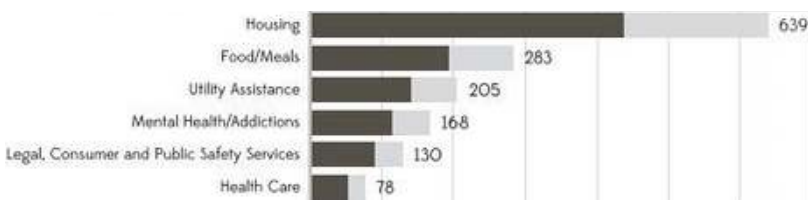
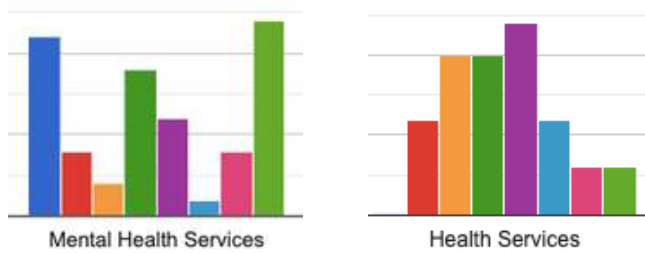
Once a week, the BFF team delivered packaged and healthy meals to Banning's unhoused population.



With vegetables picked from a locally-sourced community garden via nonprofit Overflow Farms, vegan chef Mario Carlos showed the BFF team and the Boys & Girls Club how to cook nutritious plant-based dishes.

CURRENT IMPRESSIONS

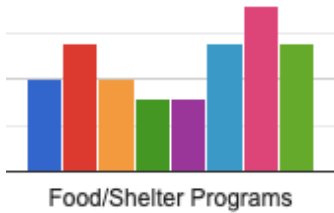
From the Banning Community Survey hosted by BFF, nearly half of the respondents expressed mixed feelings or had deep reservations about the quality of health services received or the number of services being offered. Some residents emphasized the types of health services they wished to see improved, including counseling and social services for working class families. In fact, from the 211 Riverside County Community Report from 2017, residents outlined Food/Meals, Mental Health/Addictions, and Health Care within its top five priorities of issues to address in Banning.



Source: 211 Riverside County Community Report from 2017

When asked during BFF’s 2021 Community Summit, many residents expressed the need for various physical and mental health services, including alcohol and drug abuse programs, subsidized crisis intervention programs, support groups, and services for people with disabilities. Over half of survey respondents expressed that mental health services were lacking, citing the need for more affordable therapy/counseling centers, and explaining a push to destigmatize mental health conversation in Banning schools.

Residents overwhelmingly requested educational programs and internships that leveraged our youth’s talents and diverse perspectives. In the Banning Community Survey, 48% of respondents expressed “Youth Programs” as number one of their top three priorities for the community to focus on, while 16% expressed the need for providing affordable Childcare/Early Childhood Education as a significant issue. Many residents expressed creating an education system with students more civically invested in their local community. Some suggested local internships with city government and small businesses/non-profits and the implementation for youth-led advisory boards and commissions. Others mentioned the need to provide internships and professional development as part of our school curriculum while implementing a civics-based class and program/department to better prep our future leaders.



Many community members also expressed how difficult it was to find healthy food options and assistance programs, especially in the easterly or southern neighborhoods. 42% of community survey respondents cited a lack of quality “Food/Shelter Programs.” Residents cited the lack of grocery stores and having to drive out of town to buy healthy groceries. Others mentioned the significant prevalence of liquor stores, dollar stores, and fast food options (especially on Ramsey St.). At the same time, many local restaurant owners expressed it being challenging to compete and market with the vast amount of unhealthy food options available in Banning.

HEALTH & EDUCATION RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations are derived mainly from public opinion/community input from residents of the city of Banning in terms of Health & Education.

Recommendation 1: Civics Courses & Curriculum

Several school districts are beginning to incorporate a civics-based curriculum where students identify issues in their local community, conduct research and interviews with local stakeholders, and propose solutions and initiatives that seek to inspire actionable change. Through curriculums like Kick Start Action Civics, students build networks with local city officials, nonprofits, and small business owners and create a bridge between themselves and local community leaders. For example, when 9th-grade students at a Boston school were told that P.E classes were impossible to implement due to a lack of gym, students researched that other Boston schools rent space at local YMCAs and similar facilities. They then successfully advocated for a law to allow the use of public facilities for P.E classroom use.

Recommendation 2: Mental Health Resources/Screenings for Students

Between 2007 and 2017, the total number of teens who experienced depression within the past couple of years has increased 59%. Additionally, 7 out of 10 U.S teenagers believe anxiety and depression is a major issue among people their age. As part of California's growing movement to destigmatize talking about mental health and wellness and provide more funding for resources, more schools are beginning to substantially increase the number of guidance counselors and youth therapists that are hired at a single school, while also providing routine screening and services for young students. Local policymakers and school board members can allocate more funds to hire these professionals, to identify the signs of emotional and behavioral problems before they escalate.

Recommendation 3: Appoint a Staff Member to Attend Board of Education Meetings

For many parents and guardians, work and family-care obligations make it difficult to attend Board of Education (BoE) meetings, despite wanting to be involved in their child's education. Residents recommended appointing 1-3 staff personnel to attend BoE meetings and maintain an open line of communication with Board members, administrators, and staff. This personnel will be responsible for summarizing and presenting the BoE agenda, discussions, and decisions to parents, school staff, students, and residents via social media, presentations at school sites, and email mailers.

Recommendation 4: Paid & Volunteer Youth Fellowships/Internships

One of Banning's most prominent issues is addressing the brain drain - the outward migration of talented and educated community members and alumni. Much like Riverside's Workforce Intern Programs, many residents expressed the need to provide a database of internship opportunities for our recent grads and youth to promote college and career readiness, help students build their resumes, and improve their families' health and safety outcomes. These opportunities can be sponsored by local small-business, colleges, non-profits, and city departments. They can leverage the Career Technical Education (CTE), and Performing Arts (PA) buildings recently added to Banning High School. By creating a bridge between Banning High School students and community-sponsored paid and volunteer internships, community leaders will do their part in retaining the talented graduates that are passionate about changing their hometown.

HEALTH & EDUCATION RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations are derived mainly from public opinion and are for the city of Banning in terms of Health & Education.

Recommendation 5: Create a Healthy Food Directory

Residents recommended creating an online directory of healthy food options that focus on local small-business restaurants, as well as markets and non-profits that address food insecurity issues due to the large abundance of fast food options and dollar stores that do not offer fresh produce and discourage grocery stores from establishing roots. The directory can categorize local restaurants based on ethnic types (e.g., Thai, Mexican), vegetarian and vegan options, and location (e.g., restaurants in specific neighborhoods). For non-profits that focus on food distribution and addressing health outcomes, the directory can outline the contacts, hours of mutual-aid distribution, and resources offered to residents. Try typing in "Redlands" in eatwellguide.org for a curated list of healthy food options.

Recommendation 6: Community Gym & Wellness Center

Many residents spoke about the need for a safe, affordable place to work out since many had to drive to Beaumont or other cities for gym memberships and classes. Similar how a lack of healthy food options can be detrimental to the health outcomes of our most vulnerable residents, the lack of local workout facilities has significant effects on the health of our residents, including a higher prevalence of type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and obesity. Some residents explained the communal aspect of creating a safe place to work out: "Hosting a variety of classes, like yoga or spin classes, would help create a more vibrant community!" Others explained how a non-profit wellness center and gym could benefit from government and private association grants aimed at community-based organizations. As a great example, see Zumba classes offered by Diana Benhar at Banning's Community Center.

Recommendation 7: Implement Community Grocers

42% of adults and 55% of children in Riverside County are food insecure or do not have access to readily available healthy food options. Locally-sourced community grocers can bring fresh produce to food-scarce neighborhoods. Many residents, including District 5 members, explained that there are no local grocery stores, but many liquor stores, dollar stores, and fast food, in what is considered a food desert from the lack of healthy food options.

Using a community grocer model, residents invest in the store by buying "shares" and become co-owners and decision-makers for the vision of the grocer. For example, members have input on setting prices that benefit the demographic of its neighboring residents. As a neighboring example, Riverside Food Co-Op members have one vote, and equal say on how to obtain their local produce, what prices to set, and how the benefits members receive from investing into the co-op.

Recommendation 8: CAHOOTS Model Program

Using the model developed in Eugene, Oregon, Banning can incorporate a CAHOOTS (Crisis Assistance Helping Out On The Streets) model for providing mental health first response teams for crises involving addiction, mental illness, suicide threats, and homelessness. Each unit consists of a crisis worker (who has substantial training and experience in the mental health field) and a medic (a paramedic or nurse). CAHOOTS members focus on using non-violent, de-escalation techniques rather than sending in armed law-enforcement officers who may lack the training to deal with mental health crises as they unfold. This also lightens local law enforcement's workload to focus on more heinous crimes. On average, CAHOOTS saves the city of Eugene an estimated \$8.5 million in public safety spending every year.

A wooden-framed chalkboard sign is displayed on a dark surface. The sign has a dark blue or black chalkboard face. The text is written in white chalk. 'THANK YOU' is in a tall, condensed, serif font, with 'YOU' underlined. Below it, 'for shopping' is written in a cursive script. At the bottom, 'LOCAL' is in a tall, condensed, serif font, similar to the first line. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be a store interior with shelves and products.

THANK YOU
for shopping
LOCAL

LOCAL BUSINESS & ENTREPRENEURSHIP

SETTING THE SCENE

Local businesses are integral to a city's growth, providing economic and employment opportunities for entrepreneurs and producing jobs with more fulfilling roles and responsibilities for community members. They contribute to the city's economy by keeping dollars local, reinvesting within the community; local business generates 70% more local economic activity per square foot than big-box retail. Small businesses and entrepreneurs also foster close-knit relationships with their clients, by providing direct customer service and community outreach not traditionally exhibited by franchises or larger stores. From mom and pop shops to unique restaurants, small business help build trusted connections, partnerships, and community networks between all walks of life.



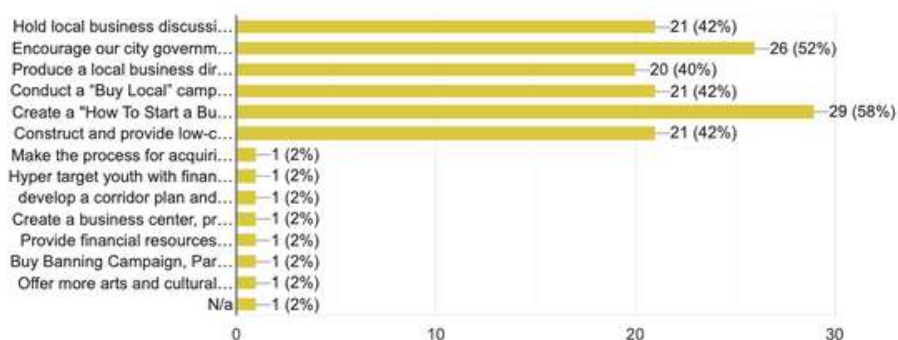
The BFF team toured the Bank of Hemet and interviewed VP of Financial Services Linda Hanley, who emphasized the bank's focus on community investment and local economic support.

Top right: We met with Jason "Hands", an elite barber in the heart of Banning's downtown. Bottom right: Reuben Gonzalez with BFF, Executive Director of Banning Chamber of Commerce.

CURRENT IMPRESSIONS

Banning has many local businesses that cater to our unique community. For this reason, local companies should receive any and all types of help. In the Banning Community Survey, we asked residents what they thought would support local businesses. The top three were 1.) creating a "How To Start a Business" campaign, 2.) encouraging local government to buy goods from local businesses, and 3.) holding well-publicized local business discussion meetings.

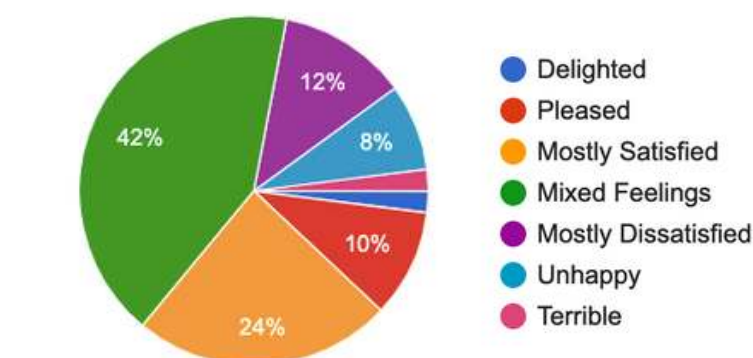
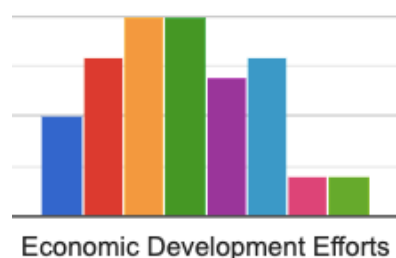
What kind of activities do you think would support local businesses in our community?



While there is much support for local businesses, residents have "Mixed Feelings" about them. However, there are many ways to improve them and prioritize entrepreneurs who want to keep or expand their businesses to Banning.

"Provide funding and support to bring sustainable business into town. Provide infrastructure grants to help businesses update their facade."
- Banning Resident

Regarding economic development efforts in Banning, residents had "Mixed Feelings" or felt "Dissatisfied" overall.



Prioritizing spaces for entrepreneurs and business owners to discuss ideas, share best practices, and recommend resources is essential. This also allows for current local businesses to expand into more extensive areas and strengthen the business community.

"Bring in more businesses, especially a grocery store toward the central or east end."
- Banning Resident

RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations are derived mainly from public opinion and are for the city of Banning in terms of Local Business & Entrepreneurship.

Recommendation 1: "How to Start a Business" Guide & A One-Stop-Shop

A guide on starting a business in Banning will help our entrepreneurs navigate complicated bureaucratic systems. Government departments involved in approving a new business can collaborate with local entrepreneurs and businesses to create the best guide. See [Elk Grove, California's Small Business Start-Up Guide](#), for example.

To make it easier for local businesses to apply for permits and for entrepreneurs to flourish, Banning should create a one-stop-shop or small business office. Like [Redland's One-Stop Permit Center \(OSPC\)](#), this office located in city hall would work as a single place for businesses and developers to submit and coordinate project plans and ultimately open up new shops. This will ensure efficient service and support from city personnel.

Recommendation 2: Career Center & Hire Local Initiative

Creating a Banning Career Center in or near city hall will help residents and youth get the centralized help they need to build their resumes, improve their interview skills, provide mentorship opportunities, and secure quality jobs within the city. See [Inland Career Education Center](#) in San Bernardino, for example.

There are many benefits to hiring locally, as residents know the local culture and business practices, and their dollars tend to stay within the local economy. A hire local initiative would give enterprises a stipend or subsidy for hiring Banning residents. The money for the assistance would come from the city's revenue from taxes or grants, like [Moreno Valley's several "hire local" initiatives](#), for example. They even have a "[Hire MoVal Job Board](#)."

Recommendation 3: Entertainment Businesses

To attract travelers and keep residents from driving out of the city, Banning can invest in places to fulfill residents' entertainment needs locally. Prioritizing entertainment businesses such as billiards and ping pong spaces, [skating rinks](#), and indoor trampoline parks will allow residents to enjoy themselves here and keep revenue within city limits. With the help of [Banning's economic development manager](#), the city can provide incentives for local entrepreneurs to establish these businesses.

Recommendation 4: Community Bank

Ensuring a robust local economy means financial services that cater to Banning residents and organizations' unique needs. Instead of our dollars going to Wall Street, they need to be reinvested in our Main Street. Like the [Bank of Hemet](#) in Beaumont, a Banning [community bank](#) would [charge less than big banks](#), [provide home and small business loans to underserved communities](#), [invigorate the local economy](#), and substantially give back to the area.

Recommendation 5: "Buy Local" Campaign & Business Directory

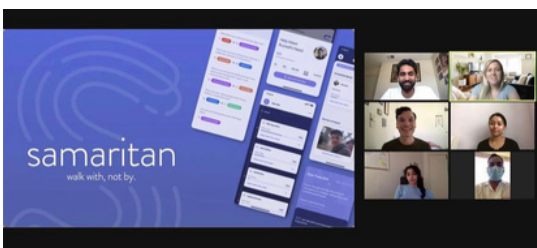
To support the local economy, the [Banning Chamber of Commerce](#) and city government should run a long-term, publicized, and detailed city-wide "buy local campaign" to inform residents about the [economic](#), [environmental](#), health, and social advantages of buying local. This will help ensure resident spending creates more local wealth and jobs, building a more substantial tax base. The city government can create a centralized local business directory to complement this initiative, just like [Redlands](#). It makes it easier to find a local business, and entrepreneurs will be better supported and showcased.



HOUSING & COMMUNITY DESIGN

SETTING THE SCENE

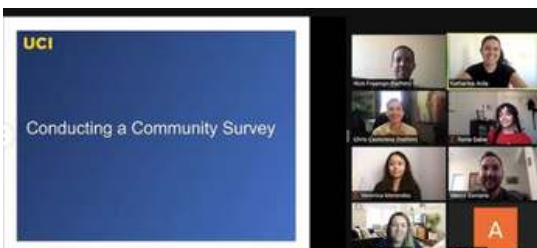
Excellent housing and community design go hand-in-hand. Community leaders should strive to provide abundant and stable housing and communal spaces that cater to all populations in Banning, including first-time homeowners, low-income residents, people with disabilities, veterans, and our unhoused neighbors. The design choices in our neighborhoods, schools, workplaces, and homes all influence our mental and physical well-being. Many cities in the US have begun adopting the "15-minute city" approach, where every human need is met within a 15-minute radius of walking - meals, gyms, laundromats, work, and more. Banning can utilize this model to intentionally create pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods, where residents can easily access both fun and basic needs that make a community, the local economy, and its residents thrive.



Ashish Pamula, Growth Lead at Samaritan, a tech platform helping provide wraparound supports for unhoused populations, explained the importance of building a network of crisis counselors, social workers, and other essential team members to address the root causes of housing insecurity.



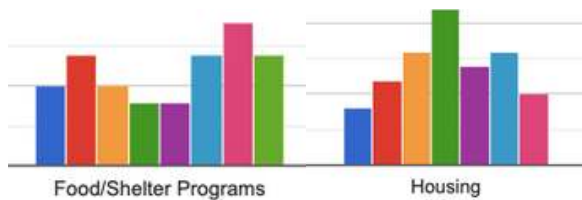
During our Banning Community Summit, the BFF team facilitated many discussions with Banning residents about various issues, including the lack of affordable housing and youth-led advisory boards and commissions in local government.



Nicholas Freeman, Ph.D. Candidate at UC Irvine, educated the BFF team on conducting community surveys that incorporate more inclusive and equitable topics, such as people's perceptions of local government services and public transportation accessibility.

CURRENT IMPRESSIONS

During the Banning Community Summit, many residents expressed concerns regarding Banning's unhoused population. One attendee explained, "We can't just give homeless individuals housing and call it a day. They need the same services you and I need to be successful; counseling, mental health services, career development". This sentiment was reflected within Banning's Community Survey, with 46% of respondents claiming the current shelter programs are lacking in addressing the needs of unhoused individuals. Others cited the encampment of unhoused individuals just a block away from the Banning Court House as an example of the need for a city-led initiative to create a homeless shelter with wrap-around supports. In fact, from the [211 Riverside County Community Report from 2017](#), residents outlined Homeless Shelters, Low-Income /Subsidized Rental Housing, and Transitional Housing within its top five priorities of issues to address in Banning.

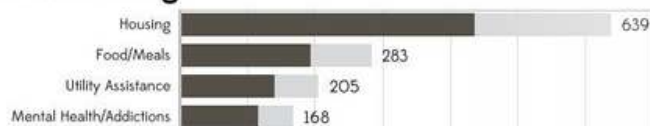


Source: Community Survey Results

73.3% of very low income and 45.1% of low-income Banning households are "cost-burdened," where residents pay more than 30% of their monthly income toward housing. 8 in 10 low-income households have unaffordable housing costs in California. Residents mentioned the need for more affordable housing options. 58% of respondents expressed a range of "Mixed Feelings" regarding median house prices, rent prices, and available housing resources for working-class residents (e.g., voucher support, rent assistance, alternative housing).

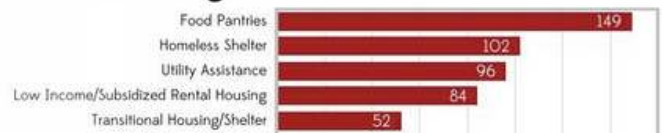
Many residents expressed the difficulties they faced in obtaining a home due to high prices and the lack of local government resources to aid first-time homebuyers or those who struggled to qualify for a loan. Others lamented the rising rent costs around apartment complexes traditionally seen as low-income homes.

Overall Need Banning



■ Terrible
 ■ Unhappy
 ■ Mostly Dissatisfied
 ■ Mixed Feelings
 ■ Mostly Satisfied
 ■ Pleased
 ■ Delighted
 ■ N/A

Overall Needs Sub-Categories



Source: 211 Riverside County Community Report from 2017

Many residents explained wanting an easy and transparent platform for expressing their ideas and solutions with the city council or planning commission. Many were unable to attend formal meetings due to familial obligations and hectic work schedules. As one resident put it, "It feels like public opinions made in city hall meetings are heard, taken note of in public documents, but no further discussion takes place." Many craved an online platform or forum where they could document their ideas from the comfort of their home and with the input of the entire city.

Refer to the "Conclusion" of this report following this section on ways the community can voice their concerns using modern technology, like the [Plan Together website](#).

Source: 211 Riverside County Community Report from 2017

HOUSING & COMMUNITY DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations are derived mainly from public opinion and are recommendations for the city of Banning, in terms of Housing & Community Design.

Recommendation 1: Diversify Housing Stock

To address the housing and rent price increases, cities are looking past traditional zoning approaches primarily for single-family homes (SFH) and large apartment complexes. Financially resilient communities comprise many “middle housing” developments, including duplexes, triplexes, condos, townhomes, and bungalow apartments (often sharing communal spaces). These middle housing options allow building multiple housing developments onto a single lot, providing more affordable options for residents. These building initiatives can encourage various projects constructed throughout the five districts of Banning, rather than SFHs and apartment complexes that tend to be built in a small minority of neighborhoods.

Another innovative solution is to utilize a Community Land Trust (CLT) model. A CLT is a community-controlled organization that purchases and holds land for specific community uses, including affordable housing. Homeowners can buy a home on the CLT land at a significant price reduction since they are just purchasing the house (not the land that comes with it) on a predetermined lease. The CLT can lease out many other homes at affordable or below-market-rate prices. See Inland Empire Community Land Trust as an example of this model that has been used in over 225 CLTs.

Other cities are beginning to experiment with “tiny homes”, typically sized under 600 square feet. The homes are more affordable, reduce the carbon footprint in building materials, and are often built out of repurposed materials. Some communities have even started building tiny home communities with shared communal spaces as an alternative to the typical single-family home suburb. Other cities like Los Angeles and Riverside, CA, have also begun building tiny homes as a low-cost solution for providing housing for unhoused or low-income individuals.

Recommendation 2: 15-Minute City

As described in the Strong Town approach, a 15-minute city or neighborhood is where all human needs can be met within a 15-minute bike ride or walk, including access to community grocers, gyms, healthy restaurants, laundromats, and communal spaces. These communities provide many positive benefits, including less pollution, socioeconomic equity (those who do not have a car can easily navigate their neighborhood), and better health outcomes. Cities that follow the 15-minute model often implement “form-based coding,” a type of flexible zoning that allows for a mix of different uses for a building (e.g., building an apartment complex atop a store or restaurant).

Recommendation 3: Wrap-around Support for Unhoused Neighbors

More than 150,000 Californians are homeless on any given night, with 3 in 4 of them being unsheltered. To provide for our most vulnerable residents, we need more than simply providing housing. Many shelters are beginning to partner with local social workers, crisis intervention counselors, hospitals, and career development organizations. Platforms like the technology organization Samaritan provide financial support and bridge counseling and medical services for its members.

Recommendation 4: Pedestrian-Focused Space

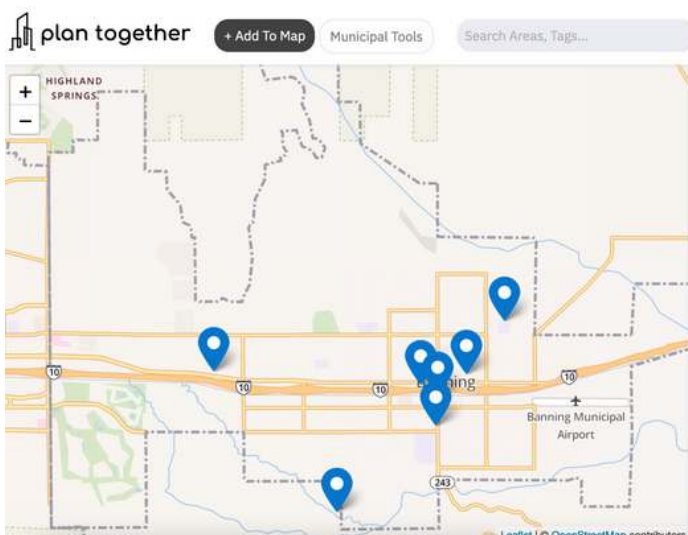
Residents should feel comfortable in their local neighborhood, in which Banning should create spaces for placemaking, a practice of creating public spaces to transform the connection with its residents. This can be achieved by creating more open areas and outdoor seating to strengthen the connection between people and the places they share. Additionally, many residents have expressed a desire for more safe sidewalks. Sidewalks should be connected, continuous, and not end mid-block or at road crossings. A sidewalk should also include curb ramps to improve accessibility and tactile surfaces to assist pedestrians with disabilities.

CONCLUSION

This summer, Banning's Future Fellowship had the opportunity to work with community stakeholders, nonprofit leaders, local and neighboring city officials, and many others to learn about how we can make Banning a 21st-century city. It was truly a transformative summer journey filled with plenty of research, community events, and of course, a shared vision of community growth.



Over the summer and continuing into 2022, BFF held "Cafecito" coffee chats every Thursday at the local cafe, The Haven. Meeting with local Banning alumni, nonprofit leaders like Boys & Girls Club, the mayor, and many others, the team was able to gather solutions to many of the challenges that Banning faces. Ideas from our coffee chats and community events will be collected and sent to community leaders via email forms, public meetings, and future community summits.



How can I get involved in community planning? Let's "Plan Together."

True progress comes from collecting ideas and solutions from everyone in the community; neighbors, students, teachers, contractors, you name it! After all, everyone is an expert in their own lived experiences, and the best solutions come from those closest to the issues.

A running theme found throughout the Fellowship was a strong desire for public input to be gathered, taken seriously, and acted on by city officials and to easily provide this feedback in the comfort of their own homes. Free applications like "[Plan Together](#)" can help the local government leverage technology for broader community engagement from historically underserved populations. If you have suggestions, praise, or even critiques on how to improve our city, visit <https://plantogether.city/area/60> to offer your insights on an interactive map of Banning. Our mission is to help create public discussions and help our community leaders be more informed about the needs of our residents.

See examples of Plan Together comments below:



City Led Illegal Dumping Clean Up Team

Jacob Potter 6/8/2020 7:49:22 PM

Across Banning, there are piles of trash and debris people purposefully leave. Items often include TVs, radios and other electronics, used clothes, broken toys, plastic and glass bottles, kitchen scraps, yard clippings and even motor oil and other vehicle fluids. Besides being eyesores, these dump piles can impede traffic, pose human safety hazards, contaminant waterways and harm wildlife. Sometimes, local citizens take the initiative to remove the piles at their own expense. More often than not however, the trash is left untouched, indefinitely.

Suggestion Community Wellness Center by Kenya Nunez

Trying to maintain a healthy lifestyle isn't just a matter of motivation; there also aren't enough safe, affordable places for people in our Banning community to work out. Opening a nonprofit gym in Ba

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We first and foremost give thanks to the city of Banning for collaborating with us and giving us the space to discover innovative solutions to Banning's most urgent needs.

We also appreciate all the help and assistance from the Boys & Girls Club of the San Geronio Pass, especially allowing the BFF team to meet regularly at the Teen Center.

The BFF team is grateful to everyone who participated in our events and to those who contributed to our Banning Community Survey. We are humbled by the officials from neighboring cities throughout the Inland Empire and beyond for sharing ideas on how cities can make tangible life improvements for residents.

We also express our deep gratitude to all those who donated to our first-ever summer fellowship; those donations helped pave the way for more exciting events and activities for our community.

We are forever thankful for the support we have received from the community. We strongly believe that by working together, we can make Banning a 21st-century city.



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